



The *Flame*

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Fall 2005

Building a Better World, One Neighborhood at a Time

Transformation is often a slow and somewhat imperceptible process. But it is a process highly prized by the Congregation of the Humility of Mary (CHM). Founded in France in 1854, the Sisters of Humility have always lived in diverse cultures, working with people of all ages. They are called to listen to the spirit in a changing world and to share the fullness of life with all they meet, especially the poor and those in need. They seek the transformation of contemporary society as well as personal transformation.



Srs. Ramona Kaalberg, Donna Schmitt, Johanna Rickl and Ursula Keough in front of their apartment building.

In a fairly recent effort to respond to changing needs, four CHM Sisters and a lay associate have formed an experimental community in a blighted area on Des Moines' near north side.

The goal of the community, which began in October 2002, is to allow members to explore a different form of living the Christian way of life, while at the same time continuing the CHM mission to live the gospel of Jesus with simplicity and joy, to work for justice within the human family and to care for the earth itself.

"Research in recent years shows that people have a heightened interest in opportunities for spiritual development through community," said Sr. Ramona Kaalberg, coordinator of formation for the congregation and one of the leaders in establishing the experimental community in the River Bend neighborhood of Des Moines.

A resolution passed at the CHM 2000 representative assembly invited anyone within the congregation to create a new kind of

community that would carry on the CHM vision and mission. Srs. Ramona and Donna Schmitt decided to give it a try.

As they began in January 2001 studying, praying and reflecting on how they could create a community that would work for vowed and non-vowed members, they quickly decided that the community should be tied in with an at risk neighborhood. The River Bend neighborhood where they resided definitely fit the criteria. As a result, each of the five members of the present core community works in the River

Bend neighborhood in some capacity in addition to regular jobs they have elsewhere.

The Core Members

Sr. Ramona coordinates programs for women who seek vowed membership and works with participants in new CHM programs. She is involved in retreat ministry and spiritual direction. In the River Bend neighborhood, she volunteers each week on the Salvation Army truck which brings breakfast to the homeless. She also participates in the community gardening project.

Sr. Donna is the resident manager of the apartment with duties at another apartment building nearby. She also directs activities with residents from the City View residential home, visits Mitchellville prison and has art/craft classes for neighborhood children and adults. Sr. Donna enhances the surroundings by providing special decorations and planting

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The Flame is published three times a year for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and their friends.

Our Mission: We, the members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary call one another to live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for the earth itself.

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(community continued)

shrubs and flowers to beautify the grounds.



Sr. Donna conducting an art class.

Rose Arnoldy, a lay volunteer in the CHM Seeds of Hope program, chose to make a one-year commitment to minister in the River Bend neighborhood and to become a core member of the experimental community. She tutors at Moulton School and helps at the St. Vincent de Paul outlet store. She volunteers at the office of Anawim Housing, Inc, which provides housing for low-income families, and serves food on the breakfast truck for the homeless of the city. She also helps Sr. Donna in the upkeep of the 26 apartment units.

Sr. Johanna Rickl is a Spanish language interpreter at Mercy Medical Center. She began her neighborhood ministry by pursuing a grant, and with two other tenants formed a coordinating committee to organize a summer festival. Most of the tenants participated in this effort to help newcomers get acquainted with their neighbors in the apartment building. Visiting Bishop Drumm Care Center, gardening, and coordinating several community gatherings are among her

ministries. Sr. Johanna also participates in local groups that focus on peace and care of the earth.

Sr. Ursula Keough provides a loving presence to retired Sisters of Humility at the Bishop Drumm Care Center where she and Sr. Johanna volunteer weekly. Activities include visiting the Sisters, praying with them and assisting as needed. Sr. Ursula is involved with Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) ministry at Our Lady of the Americas Parish, helping people of all ages learn about the Catholic faith. She takes communion to people at the Union Park Health Service. Her "ministry of the telephone" includes networking among CHM Sisters and Associates, taking messages for other core members, and supporting peace and justice issues through contacts with elected officials.



Sr. Ursula offers communion to shut-ins.

Each core team member commits to the community for one year. This allows each member to determine whether living in this type of community meets her needs.

In addition to their work, core community members gather in the morning and evening for prayer. They also share the evening meal together. Occasionally, they have a day of reflection.

Together We Can Do What One Alone Cannot

Someone posed the question to me just last week, "What are the Sisters doing now?"

fact of our race, birth place, gender or economic status, must speak for, and help those speak for themselves who have not a voice by reason of their race, birth place, gender or economic situation.

Those of us who may not be able to be on the "front line," continue to prayerfully and morally support those who are physically involved. We are also aware that without you, our friends and donors, much of what we do to meet the signs of the times would not be possible. We are deeply grateful and we offer prayers of thanksgiving for your friendship and generous support. Together we can do what one alone cannot.

-Roberta Brich, CHM President



Srs. Micheline Curtis, Joan Sheil, Marcia Eckerman and Roberta Brich working together at the Humility Center.

Without hesitation, I replied, "We are doing what we have always done. We are looking around us, assessing the needs, and helping in any way we can to meet those needs." This issue of *The Flame* testifies to that fact as you read of the many ministries of care in which the Sisters of Humility are involved. I believe we have indeed listened to the call of the Spirit in the signs of the times, especially working to raise awareness of the need to advocate for the poor and oppressed. We who are empowered, just by the

Celebration of Profession

A capacity crowd of over 100 guests, CHMs and Associates, was present for the first profession of Sr. Dawna Clare Sutton on Sunday, October 16 at Humility of Mary Center. During the Mass, celebrated by Bishop William Franklin, Sr. Dawna Clare made first profession of vows into the hands of Roberta Brich, CHM President.

A reflection on the vows and a brief history of the community was given by Sr. Michele Schiffgens. She said, "It was Miriam Therese Winter who wrote in her inspiring book, *Womanword*, the following: 'How good it is when women of faith are bonded together in unity; when sisters reach out to sisters; when women of the present learn from women of the past.'

Barbara Fiend wrote in *Refocusing the Vision: Religious Life into the Future*, 'to be authentically in solidarity with the poor is to stand in the truth of the human condition and to know that you are a part. This takes self-knowledge and human self-acceptance.'

Consecrated celibacy, in Fiend's words, is a call to give oneself to Jesus in an exclusive and permanent union that expresses itself in non-marriage to anyone else.

And Sandra Schneider tells us in *New Wineskins* that what the religious does in vowing obedience is to commit oneself without reserve to the seeking of God's will in all circumstances, and to fulfilling it with wholehearted dedication, not only because one's holiness lies in this total obedience to God, but also in order to extend the reign of God in this world."



Srs. Pat Miller, CHM Vice President, Roberta Brich, CHM President, and Dawna Clare with Bishop William Franklin



Sr. Kathleen Hanley, CHM Associates Elizabeth Hillis and Lynn Mousel and Sr. Dawna Clare close the ceremony in jubilation.



A blessing service was held at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat as a tribute to Clarice Flagel, a graduate of Marycrest and friend of the Sisters of Humility. The 50 persons in attendance were those of the Sophia Women's Group, pictured above, and Flagel family members. The service included the dedication of a concrete bench, a gift of the Sophia Group in memory of Clarice.

Paint My Life

John Michael Talbot (*The Painter*)

Paint my life with Your charity
 Paint my life with Your mercy
 Paint my life with Your humility
 And I will share in Your glory
 Jesus . . . Paint my life
 Jesus . . . Paint my life
 Color Your brush with Your kindness
 Color Your brush with Your meekness
 Color Your brush with Your gentleness
 Color Your brush with Your forgiveness
 Jesus . . . Paint my life
 Jesus . . . Paint my life
 Jesus

CHM Ministries – *helping others with your support*



Sr. Henneberry, front far right, with RCIA candidates, catechumens and sponsors.

Pastoral Ministry

Have you ever wondered exactly what a pastoral minister does? Take a look at the job description of Sr. Kathleen Henneberry, currently the pastoral minister for three parishes in the Des Moines Diocese (Sacred Heart in Chariton, St. Francis in Corydon and St. Brendan in Leon).

Ministry of Worship

- Attendance at daily and weekend parish liturgies. Song leader on rotation basis at St. Francis. Substitute song leader and lector, eucharistic minister on rotation basis at Sacred Heart.
- Preside at vigil service for deceased, in absence of pastor. Participate in funeral services. Provide grief ministry.
- Music Ministry – meetings with music ministers in planning especially for Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.
- Provide for enrichment/education by means of Liturgy committees.

Ministry of Word

- Assist the pastor and team in leading, teaching and developing the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).
- Assist the director of education in yearly planning, ordering books. Teach on occasion in cooperation with catechists. On a rotational basis with pastor, visit the students in the classes.
- Provide spiritual growth for adults through Adult Faith Formation. Order materials for Advent reflection, February marriage enrichment sessions and lectionary studies during Lent.
- Member of Religious Education Committee.

Ministry of Service

- Visit parishioners, especially the sick, shut-in, grieving and new families. Coordinate eucharistic ministers to take Communion to the shut-ins. Initiate grief ministry sessions.
- Visit parishioners hospitalized or in nursing homes. Lead prayer services at Corydon Nursing and Rehab Center/Southgate and Autumn Park on rotational basis with pastor and other ministers.
- Assist parishioners in the annulment process.
- Participate in ecumenical activities such as Inter Church Council/Ministerial associations and Church Women United.
- Participate in parish outreach activities, e.g. Crop Walk.

Ministry of Administration

- Weekly meetings with pastor.
- Attend Pastoral Council meetings and do follow-up ministry.
- Assist with notices for parish bulletin.
- Participate in pertinent diocesan events, conferences and meetings. Recruit other parishioners to attend.

Outreach Director Sr. Marty Conrad St. Mildred's Church Somerset, Kentucky

I like to think of the Outreach Center as a place for daytime “housing.” A place where one can experience a sense of community – have coffee, talk, share problems, minister and be ministered to.

On a small scale, Outreach responds to the shelter needs of transients, families who need help in relocating or setting up housekeeping, and families whose homes have burned or otherwise been destroyed. We act as a referral agency to other assistance programs (such as God’s Food Pantry, etc.). We operate a used clothing center. We locate and obtain used appliances, furniture, carpeting, and other assorted housewares and items for distribution. We provide small amounts of money toward rent and utilities. We also coordinate work groups to make repairs on houses.



Sr. Conrad with friend at the Outreach Center.

**My soul sings to you in utter joy,
O my God, and my spirit is glad
in your saving might.
You have looked on me with love
because of my simplicity and humility
and all men and women will say
I am blessed.**

CHM Honors



Sr. Micheline Curtis was presented the Alumni Educator Award by the Montini Catholic Alumni Association. Sr. Micheline taught social studies, history, government and economics from 1974 - 1999 at the Montini Catholic High School in Lombard, Illinois. During that time she initiated a support group program for kids from single parent families.



Sr. Rosalia Riedel was honored by administrators and staff at the Center for Active Seniors (CASI) on her retirement after 10 years of service.



Sr. Pauline Tursi was recognized by The Most Reverend Ronald M. Gilmore, recently elected President of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC), as one of the dedicated staff who has worked tirelessly for the NCRLC. Sr. Pauline has served as the NCRLC office manager since 2001.

Alleviating Poverty and Injustice

In keeping with its corporate concern for the poor, in 1978 the Sisters of Humility formally established the Peoples' Investment Fund (PIF). This fund provides grants and no-interest loans to individuals, families, and groups in emergency situations when they have no other financial recourse. Its goal is to alleviate poverty and injustice by assisting people in need and supporting long-range projects which seek to improve the quality of life for the poor.

Individuals use the money to pay rent, medical bills, transportation expenses, funeral costs and food. Grant funds are used to defray legal expenses or for tuition, when education is a means to a job. PIF monies are also used by senior citizen groups, migrant and seasonal workers, family crisis centers, and peace and justice organizations, to name a few.

Sr. Mary Rehman, who has a private legal practice in West Virginia, said, "I may be the only CHM who has a file folder for my requests to the PIF. Most of my clients who apply for SSI disability benefits have no income since West Virginia has no general financial assistance for adults without minor children. For the poor living in rural and small town communities, there are few accessible non-profit organizations for emergency assistance.

The fund has helped meet very special needs for some of my clients including prescription drugs, replacement of a trailer roof that had been destroyed by heavy snow, building a small deck on another trailer so an elderly woman could enjoy God's outdoors, and payment of the phone bill of a disabled person."

CHM Sisters may request funding for individuals, families or groups in need, and must be known by them personally. Members of the PIF committee evaluate requests and approve allocations according to guidelines. Priority is given to first time recipients. The program is funded with money from the Community's general budget, donations from Sisters and friends, and PIF loan repayments.

Volunteerism



Above, Sr. Catherine Linnenkamp helps in keeping QCA waterways clean during the X-Stream Clean-up '05 in August.

Below, Sr. Marilyn Schierbrock (in dark shirt) with United Way Volunteers cleaning up Davenport's central city neighborhood in September.



Katrina Relief



Sr. Judith

On Sunday, September 3, Srs. Judith Carrara and Cathleen Real headed to Mississippi along with Red Cross Volunteers on a bus with supplies provided by Signature Management Company of Davenport. There they provided relief for those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Upon their return they brought back evacuees for which permanent housing was secured at Marycrest Senior Campus in Davenport.



Sr. Cathleen



Martha

CHM Associate, Martha Trescott, who lives in Dallas, Texas, has been continually involved in the relief effort since the storm hit. She is working through various organizations to donate in a variety of ways. Many CHM Sisters and Associates have contributed money and clothing which Martha is providing to evacuee women for work attire and purchase of household items.



From the Development Director

What a joy it is for me to be a member of the lay staff at the Humility of Mary Center. Since my first day in August I have been graciously and warmly welcomed by Sisters, staff and friends. I feel blessed and very much "at home."

Each day is an example of faith and a reflection of God's love. People share extraordinary stories and experiences. Real life stories, all with a common thread regarding a Sister of Humility who made or is making an indelible impact on their life. I'm learning of the depth and reach of CHM continuing ministries – education, nursing, social advocacy, prayer, and care for retired Sisters. Your generous

contributions support the increasing demands of the Sisters' ministries.

In the next few months I hope you will stop by the development office and say hello. Development is usually synonymous with fund raising, for me it's "friend-raising." Friends helping friends support a mission and organization that makes the world a better place for so many.

Thank you for your vital support and continuing friendship to the Sisters of Humility. May God bless you and your families this holiday season and in the coming year.

-Karen Brooke

Celebration Cards for the Holidays

Celebrate...friends and family! Make every day special . . . and help the Sisters of Humility too.

- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Retirement
- Return to good health
- Promotions and Graduations
- Thinking of you
- Friendship
- Get well wishes
- Christmas and holiday greetings

No fuss, no shopping. Send a Celebration contribution to CHM and we will send a Celebration card to the person you choose, acknowledging your gift and good wishes for their special day.

In Memoriam Giving

Honor loved ones who have passed with a memorial gift to the Sisters of Humility Ministry Fund.

At the time your gift is received in the development office, a lovely keepsake memorial card, expressing sympathy and acknowledging your contribution, will be sent to the family or person you designate.

*May we find in this broken world
those moments of hope and love
that lighten our path, soften pain,
and draw us closer to God.*

Water Garden Celebrates Takes Sisters



Family and friends participate in blessing the "Restful Waters."

Thank you to the family of Srs. Carla and Maribeth Takes for their generous financial support and friendship in contributing the "Restful Waters" addition to the St. Joseph's Courtyard at the Humility of Mary Center. This beautiful contemplative water garden is given in celebration and loving appreciation for the devoted ministries and service of Srs. Carla and Maribeth.

Tom Daniel, nephew of the Takes sisters, said, "The Takes family has great admiration and respect for Sr. Carla and Sr. Maribeth and their vocation to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. We all felt it was appropriate to recognize their service as Humility Sisters, not to mention what they have meant to our family."

Credit Card Donations Now Accepted!

Use your credit card to contribute to the Sisters of Humility. For your convenience we are now accepting credit card donations. Call Karen Brooke in the development office at 563-336-8401 for additional information and to charge your gift by phone.

Year-End Giving Good for You . . . Good for the Sisters

All gifts provide important support for the Sisters and their ministries and at the same time have certain tax advantages for you.

For today . . .

Currently Sisters serve the poor in ministries that include education, pastoral care, social work, prayer, healthcare, housing, and social services across the U.S. and in Mexico. Consider a year-end gift of cash, securities, real estate, insurance or personal property. If you make a charitable contribution by December 31 and itemize your gifts, you may significantly reduce your income taxes for 2005.

For tomorrow . . .

Planned gifts assure that the Sisters of Humility will continue responding to the needs of the Church in the world. In turn, the benefits for you as a donor are many: satisfaction of giving today without spending current or retirement resources; realize estate tax and income tax advantages while providing for heirs; a gift in the form of a "life income gift" can significantly increase your income; and with a planned gift you become a member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary Magnificat Society and an important partner in the Sisters' ministries.

Circumstances differ, so be sure to check with your accountant, attorney or planned giving advisor for the most advantageous gifting opportunities that apply to your financial situation.

**For additional information please contact:
Karen Brooke, Development Director at
563-336-8401 or kbrooke@chmiowa.org
Thank you for your support at year-end
and throughout the year.**

Enjoying New Life



Ina Mae Botsford
CHM Associate
1927-2005

Ina Mae was a CHM Associate since 1976 and an active member of St. Mary's Parish in Marshalltown, Iowa.

An Invitation to

Grow With Us

"Joined in religious community, the Congregation of the Humility of Mary can accomplish what one alone cannot do in creating an environment of justice, love and peace."

Searching and Serving . . .

Our Community is Open to Everyone

Branching out to include women and men of all faiths, the Sisters of Humility offer a variety of opportunities to grow in faith and work for justice within the human family.

✦ **Vowed Membership**

Catholic women permanently committing to the Spirit and Goals of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary.

✦ **Associate Program**

Women and men, young and old, married or single, carrying the CHM spirit into their personal and professional lives.

✦ **Visitation Program**

Contemporary women deepening their journeys in faith by living and working as members of the Humility Community for a limited time.

✦ **Experimental Community**

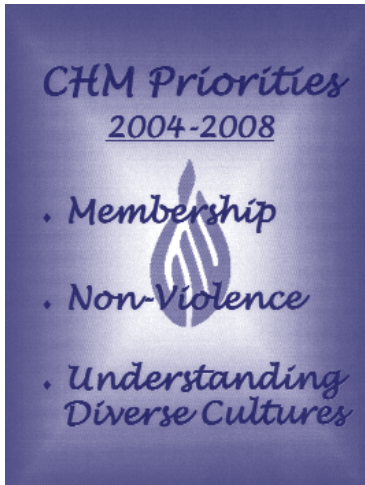
Vowed and non-vowed members living, ministering and building community within a central city neighborhood.

✦ **Seeds of Hope**

From high school students to retired couples, volunteering to serve the homeless, migrants, inner city children, elderly and those who are "the least among us."

**To respond to our invitation please contact:
Ramona Kaalberg, CHM
515-282-3521 or 563-336-8403**

www.chmiowa.org



The Sisters of Humility work with diverse cultures including Hispanic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian and Croatia. With this in mind, during the 2004 General Assembly, "Understanding Diverse Cultures" was established as one of three CHM Priorities during the four year term of the current leadership.

"Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith."

(U.S. Bishop's Peace Pastoral, 1983)



Cathy Cody, and Srs. Jeanie and Elaine Hagedorn at an Ecumenical Peace Procession and Prayer Service in Des Moines.

On Diversity and Distortion

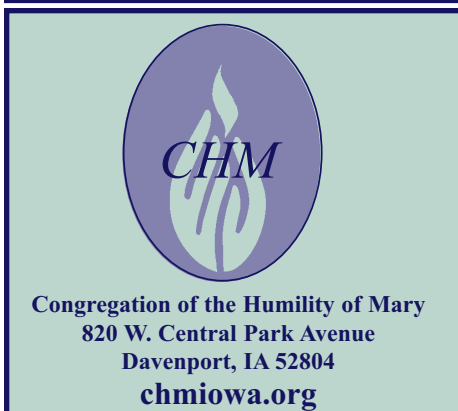
by Sr. Luz Maria Orozco

Avoid pitfalls and break stereotypes when dealing with people of other cultures. Your life is your message. Say it with action. Smile. Basic rules include: Live and let live; Let go and let God; one day at a time; keep it simple; don't sweat the small stuff; everything's small stuff; life's short: live, love, laugh.

CAUTION: Do not confuse nationality with personality. We need the strategic cultivation of emotional passion and intellectual detachment. Assess your own personality: Thinking (logical)? Feeling (trustful)? Sensing (concrete facts, the present)? Intuiting (imagination, the future)? Do you lean towards action that involves risk or security for safety's sake? Stress brings the best out in you? Or do you require a calmer environment? Our personalities dictate the questions we raise, and the manner with which we face challenges.

We can learn the way other cultures communicate. Watch body language such as eye contact, waving hands, nodding head, pointing to nose, lifting middle finger. Also, recognize that independently of race, culture, language or religion, people suffer from distorted styles of thinking: over generalization, mind reading, being "right," blaming, personalization. Remember: all humans dream, love, suffer and die.

"Wisdom is the capacity to be friendly in the midst of differences, and secure in the midst of opposition." (E. Knath Easwaran)



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